

October 23, 1956

DrE Borek
Dept. Biochemistry
College of Physicians and Surgeons
New York 32, N.Y.

Dear Dr. Borek:

I made one trial on inducing protoplasts and it looked all right; however, I have made no detailed study of this question & will be quite pleased if you will. Our immediate interest with this system is the hope of uncovering additional mechanisms of genetic transfer: so far, this has been unrewarded, but we are pursuing the conditions of maintaining K-12 as the wall-less "L-colonies".

The problem you doubtless have in mind should be a very attractive one: one suspects that it may be possible to intervene in the steps of virus formation more actively than is possible with intact cells. Obviously, a great many other people are likely to share this interest. In particular, I would urge you to confer with Dr. Norton Zinder at the Rockefeller Institute.

Dr. Morton succeeded in separating the H from the Lac markers in your strain by recombination, but they are very closely linked. Davis told us that the Lac⁻ mutant was obtained first, and the H⁻ in a second step. He no longer had the Lac⁻ as such, but we have just received a number of other mutants besides the H⁻ that had been obtained from that Lac⁻ and will test these for constitutivity before going ahead. If these are not constitutive, we will have to obtain Lac⁺-constitutive recombinants as the next step. This work has not been going as fast as I had hoped: Morton just received an appointment as a geneticist in the medical school here and is working 1/2-time on this research. But it will be pursued.

I would have been happy to have Miss Rockenbach here, but the arrangements since made have been very satisfactory.

Yours sincerely,


Joshua Lederberg